

THE POWERS AND UNDEVELOPED RESOURCES OF
THE PHILADELPHIA COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY.

AN ADDRESS

DELIVERED DECEMBER 24, 1873.

BY

WILLIAM L. KNIGHT,

LATE PRESIDENT.

PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY.

PHILADELPHIA:
COLLINS, PRINTER, 705 JAYNE STREET.
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A D D R E S S .

GENTLEMEN OF THE PHILADELPHIA COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY.

FOR more than twenty years it has been my good fortune to be connected with the Society I now address. During that period the place I occupy has been filled by many of the leading men of the profession, some of them of world-wide eminence. Called by your courtesy to follow these predecessors; whilst this honor gives rise to the most grateful emotions, it also awakens feelings of regret that my efforts must come short of my own wishes, no less than what is due to this learned body; and it is the more unfortunate at the present time, for judging from what has transpired at your recent meetings I very much mistake your wishes if you do not desire something more than merely a pleasant retrospect of the proceedings of your Society. The wonderful and changing tide of activities around us has impressed the minds of many of the members with a well-settled conviction that we must go forward with new efforts in popularizing medicine, to keep pace with the advancing march of other interests, and maintain useful and dignified relations in the community of which we form a part.

We have but to open our eyes to see that we are living in a new period of time. Every part of the framework of society is undergoing scrutiny, revision, and reform. Commerce, trade, government, and laws, public sentiment and public opinion are changed with unexampled rapidity.

Limiting these remarks to our own country, we have lately seen, by the force of public opinion, our domestic institutions, which had the sanction of a century, changed, and a race of men raised from the degradation of chattelhood to the dignity of citizenship. More recently, we witnessed an enlightened public sentiment brought to bear against the barbarism of war and the arbitrament of the sword for settling national controversies, and

we beheld this government, with forbearance and dignity, referring the most angry questions of injury and injustice to the decision of those eminent men who composed the Board of Arbitration at Geneva; and, without violence or shedding one drop of human blood, the questions were amicably settled, and, instead of malice, hatred, and the horrors of war, this decision has left nothing but neighborly relations and feelings of international good-will. That Geneva tribunal, in the dignity of individual opinion and the potency of its collective judgment, exhibits a spectacle of living majesty upon which the world can look on nothing grander. It has thrown down in the people's mind the whole ideal fabric of physical force, and has raised this nation as the exponent of an advanced civilization, above every other in the dignity of political being; and is worth more to the moral world than the extinction of slavery itself.

Such, then, are the force, power, and good results of an enlightened public opinion. But for want of this enlightenment, or sufficient and proper information, public opinion is not always right, and its extent and its power are no just measure of its rectitude.

We will give an illustration which presents to our view public opinion in a most perverted condition.

Attending a few weeks since the family of a legal gentleman, he remarked that he thought the medical profession as a body was less progressive, and behind the other learned professions, and this opinion, I believe, but too faithfully reflects a widespread public sentiment. The older members will tell you that physicians of the present day have not that exalted position in the community that was once conceded to them—that there has been a gradual declension of their prominence and power from what it was in the latter part of the past and the beginning of the present century. And why is it? Between that period and the present has rolled the great current of thought, of research, and discovery. It has been a period the most remarkable in human history, for brilliant achievements in every department of science, and in none more than the science of medicine. If called upon to name some one feature of the present age which distinguishes it from all others, and endows it with a special wonder and glory, we should say that it was the age of discovery and of the application of science to the most familiar uses.

The steam engine, the daguerreotype, the electric telegraph, and anæsthesia may be mentioned as some of these. That a man should be conveyed on his journey with the fleetness of the wind by the vapor of boiling water; that the sun should be constrained to do the painter's work, and do it with a fidelity far surpassing the labors of the most skilful artist; that words should be instantaneously conveyed, far down along the ocean's bed, to distant parts of the earth; that the hacking knife and the grating saw can cut away diseased flesh and limbs, and the patient be in a state of unconsciousness as profound and sweet as an infant's slumbers, are facts which, if predicted a few years ago, would not only have been disbelieved as philosophically false, but ridiculed as the offspring of "a mind diseased."

How many means of modern invention and research that are daily made use of in practice, of which half a century ago there was no conception! In the practitioner's hand the microscope and the test-tube answer questions once unanswerable, though on them hung the issues of life and death. To the interpretations of sounds heard within the body, Laennec, Jackson, Pepper, and Gerhard brought precise acoustic observation and experiment to show us how diseased conditions of internal parts could be marked out, the action of which we hear but cannot see. The speculum, the laryngoscope, and the ophthalmoscope have laid open to us many organs of the body before inscrutable, and show the actual but hidden causes of many phenomena, which are no longer matters of opinion or of argument but of sight and demonstration. The brilliant successes of tenotomy and the broad range of plastic operations are but part of the advances of modern surgery.

If we look at modern chemistry: Since the time of Priestly, Cavendish, and Lavoisier, who may be considered the founders of chemical science, that branch of our profession alone has probably contributed more to the wants and common purposes of life, to manufactures, to agriculture, and the arts, than all the other learned professions together. We hope not to be misunderstood in these remarks as in any way to disparage the labors and discoveries of the earlier members of our profession.

We know full well that the wisdom of each age is chiefly a derivation from all preceding ages, just as a noble stream

through its whole extent and its widest overflowings, still holds communication with its infant springs, running from the rugged hill-side, or rising in the depths of distant forests. Our proposition is simply this: The stream of professional knowledge by contributions from gifted minds has increased more in the last half century than in any similar period of time in the world's history, and notwithstanding this increase of knowledge we have retrograded in power, and our profession holds here, in one of the great medical centres of the world, a less prominent and a less influential position than our predecessors. There is some cause for this. We must lack some element of success, or we have not made use of our opportunities and resources as they did.

It was the custom in ancient Rome, on occasions of great interest, to bring forward the images of departed friends, while some one recounted what they had done, in the hope of refreshing the memory of their deeds, and inspiring the living with new impulses to virtue. This usage was prudent, it was wise, and fraught with the deepest inspiration to enter into the life of departed generations and converse with those who organized and governed their grand activities. If we wish to become accomplished in any profession it is of great importance that we turn our attention to those characteristics in others which have evidently led them on to eminence, and laid the foundation of their claim to the respect and gratitude of mankind.

Should we imitate this example and take a few minutes to notice the illustrious men who have preceded us, we will say here that we seek no occasion for personal eulogy. Our aim is to serve the great interests which they lived to promote. The names of Redman, Jones, Shippen, Kuhn, Rush, Hutchinson, Clarkson, Currie, and Morgan awaken memories which bid us be proud of the past and proud of our profession. And as we cast our eyes over the closing lustre of the last century, we discern in that group of distinguished men, one who was so remarkable for the character of his mind, the purity of his heart, and his broad humanity, that he exercised a wider influence in the profession and in the community than any other man, and perhaps more than all others; and I shall speak of him as the representative

man of the profession of that period, an example for the age in which he lived, and an example for all ages.

It is the destiny of transcendent genius, whether it be good or whether it be bad, to leave a lasting impression upon the affairs of mankind.

Dr. Rush was a man of power, various and exalted. He was distinguished as a scholar and a statesman, but medicine he loved and practised with a passionate enthusiasm.

The brief space of time in a single address forbids our entering into biographical details, or to give (even were we capable of so doing) a portraiture of his character. We will only say here that he was cast on times which were solemn and eventful, the foundations of society were shaken with the tread of revolution, and he was called to take part in transactions that were too perilous not to have need of high thoughts and motives.

The gravity of matters with which he had to deal from his youth up, gave composure and great dignity to his manner; he presented a character of strength and weight, uncommonly well balanced in all its parts, physically, morally, and intellectually.

On the 24th day of December, 1745 (old style), in Byberry Township, about thirteen miles northeast from where we are now assembled, Dr. Rush first saw the light. At the age of eight years he was sent to Nottingham to commence his classical studies under the care of the learned and pious Dr. Finley. The tranquil and religious atmosphere of a country parsonage and academy chastened the early days of Rush, and seems to have imbued him with a love for religion and for learning, which manifested itself in every act of his public and private life. At the age of fourteen he was sent to Princeton College, and graduated bachelor of arts in his fifteenth year. Of fine elocution and remarkably ready in debate, his friends desired him to study law. But the wide range of topics embraced in the study of medicine, and its intrinsic dignity, caused him to give it a preference over every other calling; and although of scanty means, he determined to give himself a European education, and he had but little difficulty in the selection of a school for the prosecution of his studies. By the labors of an able faculty, but more especially the consummate ability and eloquence of Cullen, the University of Edinburgh was in the zenith of her glory, and

for medical learning she was one of the great centres of the world. In the twenty-first year of his age, 1766, he went to that great medical school, and graduated in 1768. He afterwards went to Paris and London, and availed himself of all the sources of instruction those cities afforded. Thus, after nearly nine years' study of medicine, and three years' intercourse with the most gifted minds in Europe, he returned to this city and settled in practice, and immediately after his return he was elected to fill the Chair of Chemistry in the Medical College of Philadelphia. A young man in his twenty-fourth year, placed by the high esteem of his brethren in the highest seat of honor, it might be thought by some that this position having been obtained, further exertion was unnecessary. Not so, thought Rush. It was not enough that he had received the highest honors his brethren could bestow; but with enlarged views of his profession, and a devotion characteristic of him, he wanted it to stand inferior to nothing else in public estimation. He saw that the other learned professions, divinity and law, hold relations in the community different from ours. The Sabbath congregation and the hot competition of the bar keep them prominently before the public.

But the life of a physician is comparatively isolated, and unless the profession is brought before the community, how can the public have enlightened opinions of its researches and its discoveries, its labors or its learning. Dr. Rush comprehended fully the necessity of popularizing medicine, and he adopted a plan the most suitable in his time of calling attention to it. He wrote sermons to young men on temperance and on health, he wrote on mineral waters and other subjects, which were printed in the papers and other publications of the day, and it was said greatly to his advantage. Throughout his whole life so vitally important did he consider it to popularize medicine, that he speaks in his introductory lecture, so late as 1807, on the utility to the profession of writing on subjects of public interest.

I wish these opinions of Dr. Rush to be particularly remembered, as I believe they explain to a very great degree the secret of his success, and the high standing he gave to the profession in his day.

He was always the active agent of some enterprise for the

public good, charitable, literary, or professional, he was one of the founders of the Philadelphia dispensary, and went with untiring vigor with a subscription paper in his hands collecting funds, and in less than one year it went into operation; he was the founder of the College at Carlisle, and one of the founders of the College of Physicians, before which he delivered the first address, in 1807.

The year 1793 was the period which brought the genius of Rush prominently before the world. As you are aware, Philadelphia in that year was desolated by yellow fever; it had a malignity and obstinacy that baffled the skill of the physician, and seemed indeed to be "the pestilence that walketh in the darkness and wasteth at noonday"—from thirty to seventy died every day. Panic struck, many of the inhabitants fled to the country; whole families were down with it, and so deep and deathlike was the silence in the streets that the cart collecting the dead could be heard at a distance of several blocks. Embarrassed for want of facts in regard to the management of the disease (and no plan as yet devised seemed to be applicable to the prevailing epidemic), we are told, that with inexpressible anguish of heart he consulted every written authority as well as every physician within reach that had any knowledge or experience of this disease, but no new light or anything suggested seemed to stay the march of the destroyer. Bewildered in his efforts and baffled in his hopes, yet amidst this awful gloom he did not despair, he believed that good was commensurate with evil, and that there did not exist a disease for which the goodness of providence had not provided a remedy. Dr. Ramsay states that a manuscript account written by Dr. Mitchell of the yellow fever, as it prevailed in Virginia, in 1741, was handed to him by Dr. Franklin. In this manuscript a remark was made, "that evacuations by purges were more necessary in this than most other fevers, and that an ill-timed scrupulousness about the weakness of the body was of bad consequence in these urgent circumstances." This seemed to throw light upon the disease, and led him to believe that the apparent debility might be from an oppressed state of the system and not from exhaustion. He acted upon this theory, and he gave from ten to fifteen grains of calomel with an equal amount of jalap, repeated according to circumstances. It not only answered, but

far exceeded his expectations, and he states that it perfectly cured four out of the first five cases. His theory led him to use other remedies beside purging for the purpose of liberating the system from this oppressed state. As you are all aware, his great heroic remedy was bloodletting; his practice was most unkindly assailed, but his faith was firm, and he would have risked his life to carry its benefits to the sick, even the poorest and most despised.

Between the 8th and 15th of September, it is stated that Dr. Rush visited and prescribed for more than one hundred patients daily, and during the short space of time that he spent at his meals, his house was filled with patients, chiefly the poor, waiting for advice. While he was thus overwhelmed with business and his own life endangered, he received letters from his friends in the country, urging him in the strongest terms to leave the city. To one of these letters he replied that, "he had resolved to stick to his principles, his patients, and his practice to the last extremity." Dr. Rush's incessant labors of body and mind by night and by day, principally among the poor, nearly cost him his life; stricken down himself with the disease, it was only by the greatest care that he was spared. This was the most eventful year in his life, and in the language of one of his pupils, "It laid a solid foundation for his fame, which will last till sin and sickness are no more." Certainly no man of either ancient or modern times has greater claims upon humanity.

Although represented as the best conversationalist of his time, and the most polished man of that polished age, we see him declining in a great degree the society of the cultivated and refined, that he might be the friend of the poor, the ignorant, and the friendless; leaving the circles of polished life that he would have graced, for the abodes of poverty, sickness, and destitution, charging himself not only with their health, but also their little temporal affairs, trying to relieve their sorrows as well as their sickness, performing with his own hands the most menial acts, and never discovering in the slightest degree that he felt his fine mind degraded in these humble offices. Bent on his errand of mercy, he might be seen in these very streets in the burning suns of summer, and the fiercest storms of winter, as if armed against the elements by the powers of charity. Throughout his whole

life his presence and his name were familiar in the hovels of the poor, where distinguished men are but seldom seen; and we are told his death was more widely and deeply felt than that of any man, Washington alone excepted.

If "biography is history teaching by example," such a life is a great legacy to any profession or country. But his life has yet to be written, and undisturbed the dust of half a century rests upon his grave; this should not be so! Some of the older members may recollect the appeal that was made by our professional brethren of Great Britain to the Philadelphia County Medical Society, for a contribution to the fund for a statue to Jenner, erected in England some twenty years ago. And at this very hour that is passing over our heads they are erecting another to his honor at his birthplace. We think the good policy of our English brethren unquestionable in showing honor to their distinguished men, where honor is eminently due, and keeping the names of these benefactors in our profession before the world. By this wise course the College of Physicians of Great Britain has given the profession the first rank in social estimation, in that most aristocratic country on earth, and by organizing and consolidating its strength it has become a power in the realm, and parliament never passes a law affecting its interests without first consulting that learned body.

And why have no fitting honors been paid to our distinguished countryman? If actions speak louder than words, we may say that of all the eloquent illustrations of professional character that this or any other country has yielded, not one glows with a warmer sympathy for suffering humanity, or a keener sensibility to the varied interests of medicine than the life of Dr. Rush furnishes.

One who was probably better qualified to give a correct opinion than any other man, says: "For nearly three thousand years past, but few physicians equal in greatness have appeared in the world, nor is it probable that the number will be materially increased for ages to come."*

His great efforts in advancing the interests and organizing the profession gave him the honored title of "Father of American

* Dr. Charles Caldwell.

Medicine." To-day we commemorate the one hundred and twenty-seventh anniversary of his birth. On this spot that witnessed his public services, fifty-nine years after his death we stand in the august presence of his character, invoking the inspiration of his spirit to come from the tomb like the beautiful creeping plant that covers it, spreading widely, clinging to the separated and loosened members, binding up all in one harmonious whole. We need unification; we want effort and co-operation; the present organization of the profession imparts no pleasing anticipations, there is a deep conviction of its imperfections. Some of our able and learned men are not connected with the regular organization of their professional brethren, and the profession and humanity want the benefit of their influence and associated labors. That an effort should be made to more thoroughly unite the profession is apparent, if you consider for a moment that this Society enrolls not over two hundred, and it should embrace in its folds not less than five or six hundred members, who would act for a common purpose, a common interest, and a common good, and be a power that could press its claims, and make itself heard and felt.

These thoughts have suggested the topic for this evening, the powers and undeveloped resources of the Philadelphia County Medical Society. The present we believe to be a most important epoch in the profession, whether we regard its present position or the possibilities of the future. Conscious of the occasion, and deeply conscious of its requirements, we would, if we could, say something that would be approved by the older members; but what we shall say now is intended mainly for the younger members of this Society. The great claim that any age makes upon its young men rests upon the peculiarity of their position. Every great and noble work demands their advocacy, from the simple fact that they are the channels through which the past will flow into the future. Let the world's wealth in experience, in learning, in discovery, be great or small, it must all be transmitted through the generation that is now coming upon the stage, and their position therefore is as important as the aggregate worth of whatsoever industry has wrought, or intellect discovered, or good men done; inheritors of all that past ages have accomplished by study and by observation, bearing in their bosoms its

ripened sheaves, they are urged by the claims of gratitude and the deeper claims of responsibility to do the work of duty. And surely it would be right to afford every facility to young men to discharge the great obligations that rest upon them, but the constitution and by-laws of this Society are framed in opposition to their interest, and will not allow them to become members upon graduation. Widely different were the regulations formerly governing learned bodies of our own and other countries; the old Medical Society of Philadelphia, which numbered among its members the most distinguished physicians and surgeons of our country, admitted young men; the Royal Medical Society of Edinburgh, the oldest society in Scotland, and probably one that centralized more intellectual capabilities and more intellectual exertions than any society in Europe, admitted young men upon the recommendation of six members. And we have good authority for stating that one of the early and eminent members of the profession of this city was not only made a member the year in which he graduated, but filled a high office in that distinguished medical body, and it is alluded to in terms of the highest commendation, as a graceful act of a great, proud, and learned body—conferring this honor upon a youth and a stranger, yet one altogether worthy of it.* Unlike this is the policy of this Society, after hard study and graduation at your venerable University or Jefferson Medical College, whose diplomas are held in higher estimation than those of any institutions in this country, should young men upon graduation be presented for membership with these high credentials of character and qualification. This Society says No! One year must pass before they can be presented as candidates for membership; the greatest part of the following year is consumed in the routine of election. Thus two years, and the most important and critical years of professional life, the young physician is deprived of advantages that he greatly needs. There is a wide range of topics not embraced in the regular course of lectures in our medical institutions, and any one wishing to become eminent in his profession, or learned in its different branches, must pursue his studies outside of college walls. Three years' study

* Eulogium in commemoration of Dr. Caspar Wister, delivered before the American Philosophical Society, March 11th, 1818. By Chief Justice Tilghman.

and two courses of lectures of five month each, we all know are totally inadequate for such a purpose. He feels the want of aid and instruction from older members. At this period generally the intellect is active in the highest degree, but it is not yet meditative, settled, and discriminating, and it needs no argument to show that temptations to the young physician are peculiarly powerful in a great city like this. Here iniquity abounds and immorality puts forth all its devices. The first few years he has but few patients, but much leisure time, and if he has not the facilities to study or the society of his professional brethren, he most likely will seek it elsewhere; and how many are seen with dispositions noble and generous, starting out upon the course of life furnished with the richest prospects of success, but for want of encouragement or proper associations they are lost to the profession, and we see them drifting away from all right latitudes into a relentless current that carries them down through all the gradations of guilt. In a few years you ask for such-a-one, and they tell you that, from intemperance, licentiousness, or some kindred sin, he lies a wreck by the wayside of life.

To organize, to unite, to elevate young men for high duties, to encourage them in their honorable toils, to show them the extent and range of human knowledge, to place within the grasp of the many the means of its acquisition, should be among the lofty aims of public institutions. Young men of the present day have even stronger claims for membership in public bodies than those of the past generation, when they were freely admitted. By reason of a higher education, their minds are better disciplined by scholastic training and logical methods of thought to develop new facts and accordant principles. But some contend that it would lessen the dignity of a learned body to admit young men as members, and are of opinion that they are not capable of any worthy performance. History surely is opposed to such opinions, and shows that in all the departments of art and study, genius and talent, invention and discovery, youthful energy and enterprise have been crowned with the laurels of immortality. Hannibal at the age of twenty-five led the armies of Carthage to victory; at the same age Raphael adorned with his immortal cartoons the panels of the Vatican; and Newton stood first among discoverers. At twenty-two Washington was

an accomplished soldier; Whitfield and Edwards were princes among preachers; and at the age of twenty-one we had the poetry of Burns in its sweetest melody, and Byron's in its boldest flight. Napoleon, at the age of twenty-seven, crossed the Alps with infantry and artillery, scaled the glaciers of St. Bernard, and thrilled the world by his brilliant victories on the fields of Italy; and his contemporary, Xavier Bichat, two years younger, was scaling loftier heights in science, and published to the world his discoveries and his immortal work on Life and Death. At the age of twenty-four Dr. Smith Barton was elected to the chair of Natural History and Botany in the medical college in this city; at the same age Dr. Rush had been elected Professor in the same institution, and gave a renown that was world-wide to the city of Philadelphia as the great seat of medical learning in this country. Such instances might be indefinitely enlarged. With occasional exceptions, the great law appears to be that the foundation of all true greatness must be laid in early life.

I cannot but regard questions of age or questions of society as very unjust towards aspirants for membership in learned bodies. Such discrimination is disingenuous and illiberal.

Moses desired that all God's people were prophets, and that wish expressed the essence of a great soul. Young men stand in a peculiar relation to their own time, because theirs is especially a period of enthusiasm. The promptings of noble resolutions are congenial to their disposition, and if youth lacks the wisdom of experience and the balance of maturity, neither is it wearied with effort nor cankered by disappointment. If youth sometimes transcends the bounds of reason, old men are apt to settle into a selfish apathy or cynical distrust. Worthy of admiration is this enthusiasm of youth. This active earnestness of young men is often a fountain of glorious achievement, laying hold of ventures which other generations have rejected or dropped in despair, and bearing them on to success with its own tidal sweep, feeling as they should feel that it is a great thing to carry the banner of progress in the world, and be the pioneers of a coming epoch.

To each generation are committed its peculiar duties. This Society to give scope to its usefulness needs a building of its

own, and this we regard as the proper work of the existing generation. The objects to be fulfilled and the purposes to be answered would seem to suggest the kind of building necessary. We want a building with a hall large enough for the meetings not only of this Society, but large enough for the meetings of the State Society, and for the meetings of the American Medical Association. At the last meeting of this great national association in this city, it would not only have been gratifying to professional and city pride, but of great advantage at this great medical centre, to have shown them a hall of our own large enough for its accommodation, especially as it was probably the largest body of learned and scientific men that ever convened in this country. I refer to this as it is probable that there will be a much larger meeting of our profession in this city at the Centennial Celebration in 1876. It is to be expected that every quarter of the globe will have representatives of our profession here on that occasion, and I trust that this Society will be able to show our professional brethren from abroad something we may feel proud of. Beside a hall for its meetings, it wants a hall for a library and museum. It also wants a large gallery for apparatus, drawings, illustrations, instruments—philosophical, surgical, and every kind relating to our profession for illustrating known principles, or searching for those unknown. A gallery of this kind might be a little unique; but if it was understood that the design was to make it a collection of national importance, inventors and manufacturers from every part of our country as well as those from abroad would like to be represented in it. We may be mistaken, but we believe that a large gallery would be filled without difficulty. This Society also wants a gallery for busts and paintings of distinguished men of our profession. It would not be an easy matter at the present moment to obtain either, and every day will make it more difficult, and this I think should be regarded as a matter of no small importance. If we do not honor and show respect to our eminent men, how can we expect it from the public?

The Society may need rooms for publication; we would like to hear the rumbling of the printing press. We have in our libraries the publications of the Wernerian Society, the Cavanish Society, and the Sydenham Society, of England, and I think it would be very proper in return to send back to Great

Britain and also furnish our profession here with publications of the Philadelphia County Medical Society. Some of your members are familiar with all the minutiae of publication, and the reputation, influence, and usefulness of this Society would be greatly increased by such publications. It is a matter of importance, and we hope that it may be done. Arrangements might be made with publishers to issue works under the auspices and with the imprint of the Philadelphia County Medical Society, if it was understood that a certain number of copies would be taken by the Society for its members. New works of interest, old standard works brought up to the present state of our science, translations, and also digests of voluminous works of standard authority would give our young men something to do, and bring before the medical world those young men whose exertions and abilities are best calculated to advance our art, the reputation of this Society, and the reputation of our city.

A gentleman, familiar with the views of Professor Samuel Jackson, informed me that he expressed a deep interest in this Society, and was anxious to see a full development of its powers and its influence. Holding its connection with the Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania and the American Medical Association, viewing it in these wide relations, he regarded it as the executive and legislative body of the profession, the great central society; and upon this plinth he wished to see the whole profession more thoroughly organize and stand in monolithic strength and grandeur; but he regarded its present condition not as one of controlling influence and power which properly belong to it, but rather as one of weakness and limitation by reason of divisions and antagonisms in the profession. As many smaller societies exist in the city and county of Philadelphia interested in the investigation of particular branches or specialties in medicine, he thought it would be better to combine the advantage of union and subdivision, to centralize and yet maintain the present or even greater subdivision. Without entering upon the details of the means by which this might be accomplished, his plan, I presume, was something like the scientific committees of the Royal Society of Great Britain. Every member would be benefited by the more specific inquiries of each of these divisions, and they again would be benefited by the proceedings

of the general society and of each other. This is in accordance with the spirit of the day. If in this scrutinizing age the advantages of the division of labor are so well understood in mechanical pursuits, that the manufacturer to meet the requirements of economy and perfection employs eleven men to make a pin, very little reflection will suffice to convince us of the necessity of this division and subdivision of the different branches of our profession—immeasurably one of the most difficult of all the learned professions. And it might be the part of wisdom if every one starting out in professional life would ask himself for what he is fit. Faculties for particular kinds of work are congenital. Every man cannot be a great poet or a great painter. Some have the faculty of writing, and they fill our libraries with their valuable works. Then again there are those whose function is to observe, the investigators and discoverers, who in the great realms of truth see more than you or I can see. Where these diversified gifts (which we will call for the sake of definition the law of personal aptitudes) have been ranged under some one plan, and bear their part in some one great work, the elements of power and progress by this division of labor stand out in solid results.

It is greatly to be deplored that we had not Dr. Jackson's plan more fully unfolded; but he was lost to science and lost to the profession by long years of suffering and the breaking down of his health, which forbade his taking any active part in movements to promote its interests. Always in advance of his professional brethren, he may justly be regarded as the pioneer of the profession. Not only was the first stethoscope brought by him to this country, but other instruments and improvements in our art he was the first to use.

Brilliant, original, and enthusiastic, whatsoever was newly discovered in science, or the contrivance of man's head or the cunning of his hand had done to improve our art, captivated and delighted him, and never was he more deeply in earnest than when counselling young men to cherish a laudable desire for distinction, to study and struggle for eminence, and to impress them with a realizing sense that as individuals or as public bodies, nothing so palsied effort as low standards of excellence or of achievement. He was not in sympathy with those who fit heavily

in their place and who put themselves in antagonism to every movement or step that contemplates the advancement of science, the best interests of the profession, and we may also add, the best interests of society; who never desire to see any change, but think everything is well enough as it is, satisfied to take professional pot-luck, going down with the current of events if they happen to go down, or coming up with the current of events if they happen to come up, but never vitalizing their calling with an original thought, or making a single effort for its progress or its advancement.

There are no great interests achieved or works done in the world without enthusiasm; no man ever did a great thing without it. Was there ever an artist who was not enthusiastic in his art? and why should not we be as enthusiastic in our profession and its interests as we see it in other avocations? How gloriously does this enthusiasm sometimes burst out around us; and what a grand thing it is to see a man throw himself into some great enterprise, though it may be in but a single line of effort, for the benefit of his fellow man. Such are called men of one idea, but the man that does it is truly regal. Such was the man that a few weeks ago was carried to his last resting-place in the city of Philadelphia, with scholars and statesmen in his funeral train. A man that gave his whole estate for the founding of a hospital for the relief of the unfortunate of every creed, country, or color; and to carry its benefits into immediate operation he exerted himself in raising funds, and had collected one hundred thousand dollars when he was called from his labors.

In this connection we might speak of another gentleman whose ardent zeal and earnestness in the same great harvest field of humanity induced him to give to it the princely sum of three hundred thousand dollars to carry out its charitable objects.

It should ever be borne in mind that the responsibilities and labors in carrying out the designs of these charitable institutions fall upon our profession, and thus it is in all our relations to society. In the hour of private calamity or of public suffering we are expected to be the messengers of relief and be a defence against the dreaded pestilence and the wasting epidemic, and without pecuniary compensation give our best services to the poor and the unfortunate; and never has the public been disappointed in these expectations.

We have already alluded to the labors of Dr. Rush and his associates in the yellow fever of 1793, perilling their lives, and never forsaking the poorest or the vilest, and in the late hours of the night they would thread their way in the dark alleys and up the broken stairway in the lurid atmosphere of disease and death, so long as nature could bear up against weariness and fatigue; and sometimes from exhaustion were compelled to lay down in the house of sickness.

In 1832, when that dreadful scourge, the Asiatic cholera, visited Philadelphia, and the hospital was filled with the sick, the dead, and the dying, overpowered with fear, relatives, friends, and even the nurses fled, but I believe it is a matter well authenticated that not one physician forsook his post, but without fee or reward, or thought of compensation, remained and discharged his arduous duties.

If young men would organize and be true to themselves and true to their calling, and properly enlighten the public as to the spirit, the object, and the aims of the profession, we believe there is an extensive sympathy for them, for this Society, and any worthy and laudable undertakings, ready for development at any time, both in the profession and in the community.

Dr. Jackson expressed a wish to leave his valuable library to this Society if it would provide a suitable place for its reception, but no arrangements being made by our members, it lost his library. And this is not all: the well-selected library of one of our most active and estimable members (lately deceased) was lost by neglecting to provide a place for it. Should any other generous-minded gentleman wish to leave this Society his library or any valuable specimens, as yet we have no place prepared for their reception. We believe if proper efforts had been made a few years back, this Society would now have, if not the largest, at least one of the largest libraries, and perhaps the largest membership of any society in this country. It would undoubtedly have had the tendency of organizing the profession and of increasing its strength. We might here allude to a means of increasing the power and influence of this Society, which in justice to itself and in justice to some of its members, we think should receive more thought and consideration than has been bestowed upon it; that is, to increase the representation of

this body by electing as delegates to the Medical Society of the State of Pennsylvania, and as delegates to the American Medical Association, those gentlemen who have been active members of this Society but never represented it in those bodies. This would make them full members of the profession, and permanent members of those bodies, and many of them would annually attend these conventions as permanent members, and strengthen our delegation in the State Society, and, what is still more important, increase our delegation in the American Medical Association, where questions may arise affecting more or less deeply our interests; and our delegation is often less than some others, and short of what it should be to maintain its proper influence and interests in that body.

Philadelphia has always claimed to be the great medical heart of this country, and of having had the largest classes that ever assembled in one institution for purely medical instruction in the world. But institutions, like individuals, have their vicissitudes, and it may not be so pleasant, but perhaps more wholesome, to look at the other side of the picture, and we need not go beyond the communities immediately around us for an illustration. We see east of us institutions for the last two years outgraduating us. In the west we see the Medical Society of the State of Ohio outnumbering the Pennsylvania State Medical Society, at its last meeting, two to one and some to spare. Active and better organized, may not these institutions struggle for supremacy? Can our members see this without feeling some apprehension that the science of medicine may take her departure from this, her long favored seat, and seek elsewhere for more generous hospitality? Should we not strive to keep our city the great heart of the profession as heretofore?

The reasons that might be urged for maintaining our city as the great heart of the profession are manifold. Medicine is unquestionably the foster-mother of other sciences, and, speaking in general terms, medical centres absorb the scientific and literary talent of a country. As instances of this we might mention Edinburgh, Berlin, Paris; and our own city in this respect forms no exception to the rule, but has always been regarded as the great centre of physical science. Since the time of Franklin, great names in physical science have been connected with hers.

Rittenhouse, Rodgers, Ewing, Nuttall, Barton, Say, Bache, McClure, and many others we need not enumerate, are familiar to the scientific world. Intellectual pursuits and affinities bring together not only scientific and professional men, but also those engaged in that literature called *belles-lettres*; and however lightly scientists may value this, as it establishes no solid facts, yet it is extremely necessary to an accomplished culture, and is to the more substantial material of knowledge "coverings of tapestry" and "clothing of silk and purple."

The present we think a most auspicious time for such an effort. The public mind is excited as never before with its varied interests. Look at the city and its adornments, its crowded marts of enterprise, its gigantic strides in the interests of commerce, and we trust, too, that this age is unfolding something better than material triumphs. The results of past thought and past endeavor are pouring through it in expanding currents of sound and fruitful knowledge.

Some of our scientific bodies are fully up to the spirit of the times. As an instance of this we might point with satisfaction to an institution, not only as kindred to our own by its being conducted principally by members of our profession, but still more nearly related to us in its line of researches and investigations in science, and furnishing us an example of what a few men can do when they are in earnest. By the energy and wise policy of its members, the Academy of Natural Sciences is in the full tide of success. At this moment they have in course of erection a building that will be an ornament to our city, and a lasting monument not only of the taste and enterprise of its members, but ample in proportions for the reception of the largest and finest collection in Natural History between the two seas, and in some of its departments probably unsurpassed in the world. Occupying as we do a wider and more important field of inquiry and usefulness, our labors and the result of our efforts should be correspondingly greater. And the first and, we believe, one of the greatest works we could perform would be to enlighten, control, and give a healthier tone to public opinion in regard to the science of medicine. The foundation of the success of empiricism and imposture lies deep in the soil of popular ignorance, and we believe the policy pursued by Dr. Rush to be the true

one, to give a right direction to public sentiment by calling attention to popular scientific subjects.

The topics that brought out the largest number, that crowded our lecture-rooms the present season, have been historical and scientific. We might name the lectures of the historian Froude, and those of Professor Rodgers and Professor Tyndall. Under the auspices of this Society, should there not be a course of popular lectures during the winter months by some of the most prominent men of our own country or from abroad for the diffusion of scientific knowledge? In Berlin, Professor Virchow (who is so well known to the profession in this country), and Dr. Von Holtzendorff began, many years ago, a course of popular lectures which are printed in pamphlet form, making a part of a series that at present number over one hundred and fifty lectures on various scientific subjects, which are a valuable acquisition to popular literature, and have had their share in maintaining the supremacy of Berlin as the intellectual capital of that great empire. Could not this plan be adopted here with equal advantage? It would do more to check irregular practice in all its forms than the enactments against quackery which we believe the Legislature of Pennsylvania has at this moment under consideration. It is popular scientific knowledge, and not legislative statutes, that will protect the community against empiricism and imposture, which are bold and unblushing at the present time, and so encouraged by the public that some fear that spiritualism, clairvoyance, the decillionth part of a grain of nothing, or some kindred delusion will be erected into a science and take the place of regular practice in medicine. And it may be questioned if the history of charlatanry, from the beginning of the world to the present hour, can furnish a more barefaced instance of imposture on the one hand, or more innocent credulity on the other, than that fallacy which is most in favor at the present day. The charm, the amulet, incantation, or sorcery never offered a more gratuitous outrage upon human reason, and we might feel disposed to smile at the ready belief of persons (otherwise intelligent) in such astounding absurdities, were the consequences less grave; but this system of imposture and quackery plants the seeds of evil which produce their envenomed crop; and we appeal with confidence to the experience of every physician of twenty or thirty years'

practice, if the standard of public morals in the community has not been lowered, and if the crime of child-murder has not been steadily and fearfully on the increase, and if its melancholy results are not encountered in every stratum of society, the educated as well as the ignorant. How often do we witness that nervous suffering which embitters all enjoyment, that unnatural paleness which no cosmetic can hide, the vital powers broken down in the very bloom and loveliness of womanhood. And what physician, as he bends over the couch of sickness and sees the young, the loved, and the gifted fading from earth as a star in the morning twilight, does not feel the solemn urgency for some movement to subdue this crime?

That evil brings its own destruction is written upon every page of life, and upon every page of history; and what will be the result of this crime, if not checked, which is telling its fearful tale upon the natural increase of our population in many districts of this our highly favored country, is only known to Him who can tell the causes that laid waste whole countries in Asia, and her populous cities in the dust; her pyramids that once looked down on the busy throngs of life, now overlook a wilderness of death. No nation or people can be great or continue in their greatness, except as they nourish great moral sentiments, or as they originate great ideas, or as they train great characters, venerate and follow great examples, and are loyal to great principles.

Fellow members of the Philadelphia County Medical Society, the measure of our duty is the greatness of our opportunities, and by this standard will we be subjected to the judgment of history. Not only have we the responsibilities that rest upon us in common with all other human beings, but also those that pertain to our peculiar calling, which touches the great issues of health, of life, and the well-being of society, and this foul crime of our age comes more immediately under the cognizance of our profession than that of any other members of the community, and the duty of taking some step for its suppression rests probably with us more than any others.

At the risk of being charged with repetition, we would say to the young members (to whom these remarks are addressed), that the profession should be more thoroughly organized, the

powers and resources of this Society more fully developed ; and to enlighten and gain sufficient influence over public opinion, that we may act on the movements of society to repress this great evil of our day, and be the conservators of virtue and morals, which has marked the history of our profession in all the ages and eras of the world.

In that historic age illustrated by Socrates, Herodotus, and Thucydides, high over all stood Hippocrates. The inhabitants of Argos voted him a golden statue, and at his death, temples were erected and divine honors paid to his memory by a grateful people.

May our labors and services be such as to give the title of physician its appropriate place and that distinction which once overshadowed medical names and medical honors.

